life of the Chinese in the fragmentary manner in which it has been touched upon in preceding chapters and in this brief summary. This is all the more so because no satisfactory account is to be found in any language and the subject is one which invites exploration. If and when such a work is written it will treat not only of religious and philosophic thought, but of institutions, ceremonies, the relation of religion to the state and to society in general, and the effect of religion upon art and literature. It will pay attention to religion both as practiced by the ruling and educated classes and by the masses of the people and will record the rise and decline of popular religious cults and the story of the origin and disappearance of the many divinities which for longer or shorter periods have been revered by some or all of the Chinese. Whether such an account can ever be composed is uncertain. Obviously it will have to rest upon many preliminary studies in the vast literary remains of China's past and much, too, must wait upon archaeology. Such a history, if it is ever compiled, will be of the greatest interest and value.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE CHINESE

Unsatisfactory though these brief historical notes are, they may render somewhat more intelligible religion as it was on the eve of the revolution brought by the coming of the Occident and as it exists to-day. They will, moreover, serve to make clear some of the reasons for the religious attitudes of the Chinese.

About these attitudes certain generalizations can be ventured —subject, as generalizations usually are, to

exception and qualification. Any picture painted with broad strokes may well fail to portray what religion has meant to any one Chinese. To include this would require a large canvas with detailed portraits of a number of individuals of varying types and would far transcend the proper limits of this chapter. Sweeping outlines may, however, possess a certain rough accuracy.

First of all, then, religiously the Chinese are very eclectic. In proportion to the total population the number of simon pure Buddhists, Confucianists, or Taoists has been and is comparatively small. The average Chinese has long been and still is an animist. a Buddhist, a Confucianist, and a Taoist with no sense